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Taft-Hartley Act

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MEMORANDUM

from Senator Mike Mansfield (D., Montana)

October 12, 1959

It appears to me that if the 80-day cooling off period under the Taft-Hartley Act is invoked that the end results will be contrary to the desired objectives. If Taft-Hartley were to be seriously considered, it should have been put into operation before the steel workers walked out and the strike got under way. If it is invoked now, it will mean that it will take from ten days to four weeks to fire the furnaces and get them into regular production, and it is quite likely, in view of the ill feeling engendered by the length of the strike, that the men, if forced to return under Taft-Hartley, will not operate at maximum efficiency. That would mean if the strike were not settled within the 80-day cooling off period that the steel industry would be put to great expense in going into production again; that the returns, in terms of productivity of labor would not be normal; and that at the end of 80 days the situation would be worse than it is now.

It would be my hope that a 3-man panel appointed by the President would be able to bring about a negotiable agreement between the steel union and the steel industry. I would suggest also that, before the Friday deadline is reached, the President call into the White House the first string teams of the steel industry and steel labor, put them in

the same room, and use every possible means at his command to bring about a negotiated settlement rather than to impose Taft-Hartley. He should, figuratively speaking, start "knocking heads" together.

The Administration and the people of this country should be aware of the fact that regardless of the outcome of the present strike situation, that its bad effects upon the economy of the country as a whole are going to be felt more and more in the days and weeks ahead and that the \$95 million surplus which Budget Director Maurice Stans ^{looks ago,} said, would be forthcoming at the end of this fiscal year has now gone out the window. The hope of the Administration and the Congress and the people of this country for a balanced budget this fiscal year has, in my opinion, vanished.

It is all right for the Government to keep hands off when there is a prospect for settlement; it is all wrong for the Government to delay, to procrastinate, to issue pronouncements and to make appeals if no settlement is forthcoming, and it may well be all wrong for the Government ~~to~~ to intervene after the point of no return has been reached, rather than before.

The strange way in which the steel strike has been handled seems to call for new legislative means to handle situations such as this which affect the public interest and the entire economy, and

perhaps one of the ways to do this would be to consider seriously the
creation of Labor Courts to handle and adjudicate matters of this kind
which affect the national economy as a whole.